

with appropriations, and with the general expenses of the Government. It may be difficult to meet this expectation of the Board; still, if you find it possible to appropriate the amount, which appears to be necessary for the speedy completion of the Asylum, without sacrificing other important interests, I would recommend you to do so. There can be no doubt but that there is much suffering amongst that large class of unfortunate beings, who, for the want of proper medical treatment, are daily becoming more confirmed in their sad affliction. Humanity, as well as good policy, calls for legislative protection.

The experience of the past year fully demonstrates the propriety of the recommendation which I made to you, at your last session, in regard to the House of Refuge. I do not hesitate to express the decided opinion that there is no one measure, which can form an object of legislative solicitude, as important as the establishment of a House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents. The statistics of crime show the appalling fact that a very large proportion of the worst class of criminals consists of youths from the age of fifteen to twenty-two. Many of them, when captured by the Law, and brought within view of the Gallows or the Penitentiary, have disclosed circumstances of early poverty, neglect and abandonment, as the true causes of their vicious career, which reflect most discreditably upon society and the State. Their vices are, frequently, but their misfortunes. I have taken some pains to ascertain the truth of this assertion. If society is always so ready to punish, it cannot be justified in refusing to prevent the commission of crime. It is your solemn duty to do this, at any cost. The delay of every year adds hundreds to the list of felons. Modern civilization has devised no plan more efficient for the reformation of abandoned youth, than that to be found in Houses of Refuge. Such institutions do not contemplate the reclamation of those who, disregarding the lessons of virtuous parents and preceptors, are led by the promptings of a vicious nature into the paths of crime. They are designed, especially, to pluck the burning brand from the fire—to rescue from vice those innumerable children of misfortune, who are only depraved because society has abandoned them to ignorance and the influence of evil example. The Penitentiary of Maryland testifies loudly upon this subject; and yet, where one such young criminal has been convicted, ten have been suffered to go at large. Youth claims impunity; Courts, Juries, and the Executive are appealed to, in its behalf; and many are rescued from the corrupting atmosphere of the Penitentiary, by a natural sympathy for their tender years, who would have been adjudged fit subjects for the mild and corrective discipline of a House of Refuge. Hence, Baltimore City, also, testifies with a peculiar emphasis. I shall not deny, because I believe, that much of the blame is properly attributable to the inefficiency of the municipal regulations of that City; neverthe-